

patience by Val-Creative

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

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Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

Pairings: Mike W./Eleven/Jane H.

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Summary: In 1988, during the holiday break, Mike gives El a ring.

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There's an old junkyard down Randolph Road, all the way past Hawkins National Laboratory and where Benny's Burgers used to be. Anything left of the buildings seems to be piles of rubble now, dismantled and investigated and vandalized by locals.

Mike doesn't give it a second thought. He's seventeen, hands sweating, nervously glancing over to El biking alongside him as they enter the fenced off area. She visits for the holidays, right after her sixteenth birthday on the 11th, and Mike regrets not being there. It's 1988. In the freezing cold and rain, with El in her colorful, puffy parka and scarf, and she can ride a bike now, Mike realizes. El's high side-ponytail gathered together by a black, velvet scrunchie. Her teased, brown hair dampened.

She's taller, skinny as a weed and less pale. As far as Mike knows, El never regained her powers. She lives in Pennsylvania with a foster family when Joyce lost custody, and her new parents thankfully spoil her to death, keeping the name Jane. El goes to an all girl private high school, and she still calls Mike on landlines since Dustin moved and took his high-powered radio with him.

Once they've discovered one of the busted, huge frames of a convertible, Mike throws a blanket over it and slides in with El. He fishes a ring out of his pocket, presenting it to her. Copper-shine and foldable. El widens open her mouth, stunned.

"Cool, right?" Mike says excitably, as El's fingers twist it gently and the ring pops apart into a sphere-like structure with its copper bands engraved. He recognizes the symbols in astronomy. "I found it at a thrift place when we were on vacation in Florida." After another moment of silence, Mike clears his throat, flushing. "It's not like a promise ring or anything. I don't want you to feel like you *have* to wear it, El. I-I don't know. You can keep it, or you don't have to. I just... I miss you *all* of the time..."

"Mike..."

"God, okay. I just don't want you to *forget* me, y'know?" Mike rambles, bordering on tears and panicking. He can't stop talking and being upset. "I know you're happier where you are—I *just*—" He halts, El's palm covering Mike's wind-chapped, red lips.

"Mike," El whispers, smiling softly. "I love it."

Relief floods him. Mike rubs El's hand between his, kissing the slit of El's bare skin on her wrist. Where her parka sleeve and mitten don't quite touch.

She peels off her striped, woolen mitten, Mike's ring only able to fit over her thumb. It's the same overwhelmed, weepy look on El's face when they're 20 and 21, standing under a tented canopy of white roses and silk, admired by their friends and family, El's hands running fondly over the front of Mike's tuxedo, and the breeze shifting El's wedding veil.

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Stranger Things isn't mine. Requested by George Harrison (FFN): "mileven dealing with the distance, maybe a couple of years later." They're so dumb and cute. Ughh. Heart eyes. Well thanks for coming in and reading this, and if you liked it, I would love to hear what you thought! :) What's your fave older Mileven headcanons?

((Want a request for Stranger Things? I'm doing 100-500 word drabbles of any friendship or romantic ship + any prompt until I feel like quitting. Rules: you need to comment here and provide a friendship or romantic ship and prompt. Please do not ask for anything with Billy Hargrove. Thank you. The only requests I'll be looking at is if you ALSO commented about the fic you just read as well. It's only fair. You came to this fic to read it and me doing something for you later on is a sweet bonus!))